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Wade, Turnbill to participate in Largo clinic

TENNIS
H.A. Branham

A firsthand experience

At last year's U.S. Open, two tennis writers were at the National Tennis Center working up a 40-and-over sweat. It was early. It could've been going better.

Right about the time the rallies finally picked up, a statuesque women walked on the court, apologizing that we would have to move. But first, she wanted to know if we could "hit a bit" to warm her up for a clinic she would be conducting later that morning.

What followed were some of the best 15 minutes I've spent on a tennis court.

Virginia Wade — former Wimbledon and U.S. Open champion — was across the net. She was like a double espresso. The groundstrokes flowed from her rackets. We were obliged to do our best to follow her example.

It went well. Thanks to her, we started finding the strings. Even looked like we knew what we were doing for a moment or two.

And that was without her saying a word.

Friday she'll be in Largo, offering actual instruction. She joins fellow former tour professional **Wendy Turnbull**, who is running another clinic sponsored by the Virginia Slims Legends Tour at Bardmoor Tennis and Fitness.

Wade and Turnbull are playing the tour for the second-consecutive year. It comes to Saddlebrook Resort in Wesley Chapel on May 4-5 with **Martina Navratilova**, **Evonne Goolagong** and **Billie Jean King** the other top names.

The clinic — scheduled 9:30-11 a.m. [illegible] free, open to men and women. **Marta Vander Vlis**, Bardmoor's membership manager and tournament director, expects 75-100 players. Call (813) 391-2205 for information.

In the Wade-Turnbull combinations, they'll get it all. Wade's flowing strokes and Turnbull's resourceful all-court game. Wade was more the singles player in her day. Turnbull fashioned one of the all-time doubles records, winning nine Grand Slam titles, many with **Rosie Casals**, another Legends Tour member.

Take it from someone who's seen these shows coming: this will be good.

Tickets sales for the Legends Tour's Saddlebrook "are brisk," event manager **Kitty Winterhalter** said. It was a sellout last year [illegible] a slightly-larger stadium this year — 3,200 seats, all reserved. Tickets are $27.50 for one day, $50 for two days. Box seating is also available at various prices. Call (813) 538-2221. The competition format is uncertain, Winterhalter said. But there will be singles and doubles. You can bet that many people hope to see Navratilova and **Pam Shriver**, the greatest women's doubles team, paired again.

Cheval Country Club in Lutz is site of [illegible] Virginia Slims Grass-roots Challenge "local qualifier." Winning teams in three divisions advanced to the regional championship May 3-4 at Saddlebrook — part of the Legends Tour weekend. Winners were **Susan Wedding** and **Cindy Gooton** of Tampa in 3.5, **Roxanne McVay** of Winter Haven and **Becky Pate** of Auburndale in 4.0, **Ruth McGeachan** of New Port Richey and **Stephanie Botell** of Lutz in 4.5.

In Tampa, the Sandy Freedman Tennis Com[illegible] formerly known as Marjorie Park, has a new phone number: (813) 259-1664. [illegible] The University of South Florida men's team is No. 24 in the latest national Division I rankings. No. 1 player **George Bastl** is 34th in Men's Singles. USF's women are 38th in the country.

Tribune file photo

Former Wimbledon champ Virginia Wade, pictured here competing in 1977, will participate in a free Bardmoor clinic.

UPCOMING TOURNAMENTS

- Today-Monday: Pot of Gold Classic, East Lake of the Islands Golf and Country Club, Palm Harbor, men's and women's Open singles and doubles, fee $35 singles, $40 doubles, deadline today.
- Saturday-Monday: Cinder Junior Super Series, Weaver Park Complex, boys and girls 12-18 singles, fee $[illegible] Call (941) 499-8241.
- March 21-24: Clearwater Open, McMullen Tennis Center, men's Open singles and doubles, fee $50 singles, $50 doubles, deadline March 19, call (813) 462-6144.
- March 23-25: University of South Florida Spring Intensity Championships, Tampa, boys and girls 12-18 singles, fee $22, deadline March 20, call (813) 684-9031.
- March 29-April 1: Country Club of Sebring Clay Court Championship, men's 40/50/60/70/85 singles and doubles, women's 40/50/75 singles and doubles, fee $20 singles, $30 doubles, deadline March 27, call (941) 382-8538.
- March 29-April 1: Carrollwood Village Golf and Tennis Club Junior Championships, Tampa, boys and girls 10-14 singles, fee $20, deadline March 26, call (813) 961-1366.

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